CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE FIVE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 21 June 1990, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Oswaldo de Rivero (Peru)

GE.90-61731/2055B

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 558th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

First, on behalf of the Conference and myself, I should like to warmly welcome the representative of India, Ambassador Indrajit Singh Chadha, who is with us today. I am pleased to convey to him my congratulations on his appointment and to wish him success in the functions entrusted him by his Government - Welcome, Mr. Ambassador.

Today, the Conference is continuing consideration of items 1 and 2 of its agenda, entitled "Nuclear test ban" and "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". However, in accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure, members who so wish may make statements on any other subject relevant to the work of the Conference.

I have on today's list of speakers the representative of the German Democratic Republic and the representative of Argentina. I now give the floor to the representative of the German Democratic Republic, Ambassador Dietze. You have the floor, Mr. Ambassador.

Mr. DIETZE (German Democratic Republic): Mr. President, I have already had the opportunity to warmly welcome in our midst Ambassador Chadha of India and Ambassador Adolf Ritter von Wagner and to wish Ambassador Dimitri Kostov, who left Geneva yesterday, all the best in his future assignment.

May I, with your permission, use this occasion today to bid farewell to two of our outstanding colleagues leaving us soon. Ambassador Luvsandonjiin Bayart of Mongolia and Ambassador Istvan Varga of Hungary have significantly contributed to the endeavours towards the achievement of the objectives of our Conference. Their great experience and diplomatic skill and their ability to foster personal relations is well known to all of us. We are not only losing two colleagues, we are losing also the dean of the diplomatic corps in the field of disarmament, Ambassador Bayart, who has rendered distinguished service to this Conference during his tenure.

In taking leave of our colleagues, I wish them all success in their future responsibilities, good health and well-being.

Mr. President, my statement today refers to item 4 of the Conference's agenda, i.e. the negotiations on chemical weapons. Like many other members of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, the German Democratic Republic accords high priority to the conclusion of work on the convention on a general, comprehensive and effectively verifiable prohibition of chemical weapons at the earliest date. In order to encourage the speedy continuation of the negotiations on a CW convention and to gain experience in translating the already elaborated parts of the convention into practice, trial inspections were conducted in the German Democratic Republic, also in the field of challenge inspection. The three working papers I should like to introduce

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today are based on the experience gained by such an inspection in a chemical industry plant. The report on an inspection in the military field will presumably be submitted to you soon.

I should like to offer some explanatory remarks concerning the documents at hand. The inspection was carried out in March of this year in the WOFATOX factory of Chemistry AG, Bitterfeld, a facility producing the organophosphorous pesticide parathion-methyl. The aim of this inspection was to develop and test an inspection methodology for challenge inspections in industrial plants. Inspection procedures and time frames were not the primary objectives of the trial.

The results and preliminary conclusions are set forth in working paper CD/996 entitled "Report on a Trial Challenge Inspection in a Chemical Industry Plant" before you.

A detailed description of the inspection methodology developed is contained in the second document, CD/997, entitled "Inspection Methodology for Challenge Inspections in Industrial Chemical Plants". The approach designed for our trial challenge inspection was a "layered inspection methodology", i.e. a step-by-step approach. More intrusive steps were triggered off by the results of the preceding less-intrusive inspection layers. That approach was considered to allow an inspection team to develop its actual inspection strategy depending on the specific situation at the site. Four such inspection layers were designed.

The third working paper, CD/998, addresses questions concerning chemical analytics and a prototype measuring instrument, i.e. a portable PC-supported ion mobility spectrometer, which was tested in these experiments for verification purposes. This instrument was used in laboratory experiments and in the actual inspection. It was to demonstrate the feasibility of exploiting memory effects in a chemical plant in order to identify residues of former production at trace level.

Thanks to the support of Mrs. Rautio, the prototype instrument was introduced in the Technical Group on Instrumentation last Tuesday and a detailed description was presented to our distinguished experts.

It is not by chance that questions of methodology have been in the focus of our investigations. Thereby, the delegation of the German Democratic Republic is continuing the work it commenced on this issue in its working papers CD/CW/WP.198 and 208. We are acting on the assumption that a sound inspection methodology, especially for challenge inspections, can conduce, firstly,

- to carrying out such inspections with a high degree of efficiency and credibility; and secondly,

- to excluding the unjust disclosure of confidential information.

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We deem it instrumental that such an inspection methodology, which is founded on objective criteria and applied according to the specific circumstances, ensures the stability of the verification régimes of the CW convention. The elaboration, improvement and streamlining of such verification methodologies will surely be within the responsibility of the future CW organization's technical secretariat. By the working papers at hand, my delegation intends to contribute to a better understanding of the nature of challenge inspections and to help resolve still outstanding problems.

Mr. GARCIA MORITAN (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, allow me to express my delegation's satisfaction at seeing you in the Chair, presiding over the deliberations of the only negotiating body on disarmament. You represent a country for which Argentina has particular admiration, great affection and respect. We wish you the greatest success.

Mr. President, the resumption of negotiations by the Conference this summer offers a good occasion for some observations on the development of the international scene, particularly as regards aspects relevant to the Conference, as well as for some reflections on the way in which our Conference reacts to the stimuli of the global security context or, perhaps more accurately, why it does not do so to the extent that we would all like to see.

There has been no slackening in the international dynamic since we ended the first part of this year's session - far from it. We have witnessed events tending to confirm a period of change and revision of patterns which seemed to be immutable elements of reality. Meanwhile, another summit meeting of the Presidents of the two States which have major arsenals of nuclear, chemical and conventional weapons has marked the continuity of dialogue at the highest level on matters of international security.

From the results announced by the press, one may hazard the guess that both super-Powers continue to be reasonably committed to the objective of reducing their nuclear arsenals even further. However, the information at our disposal is scanty and we confess that we are somewhat surprised that the delegations whose Heads of State were the protagonists in such an important international political event have not informed the plenary of the Conference about the results of the summit meeting.

We have been told about a bilateral agreement on chemical weapons and the adoption of a joint declaration on the non-proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons and missile technology. Beyond that, the Conference on Disarmament knows little. The implications of this fact deserve attention not only from the point of view of the oft-mentioned complementarity of the multilateral and the bilateral system but also, and perhaps much more, when we see that the summit dealt with and agreed on documents in such fields as nuclear testing, which, let us remember, is still the item that heads the agenda of this Conference.

The same can be said about nuclear weapons, an item included in our programme of work for discussion this week. Obviously, such bilateral negotiations are not simple, but we observe with some concern that the targets

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announced by the actors themselves often seem to dwindle in the face of the complexity of reaching the desired goals within the time-limit set.

Thus, to give a concrete example, the oft-repeated commitment to reduce the strategic arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union by 50 per cent is now a pre-agreement whose scope is, in fact, limited to 30 per cent, depending on which source or military analyst we may wish to credit for even lower figures are being mentioned.

None the less, it would seem that some important points of convergence have been achieved: rules of counting geographical scope of the systems to be included in the reductions, and verification procedures which look like being even more refined than those of the INF Treaty - the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles.

Undoubtedly, the fact that negotiations are continuing is a positive development and we welcome it. We therefore hope that, as they did during the first part of the session, the heads of the delegations involved in the negotiations on nuclear and space arms will once again give the Conference their analysis of the development and prospects of these bilateral discussions. Similarly, we trust that those delegations will maintain the indispensable tradition of providing the Conference with the official documents from the various negotiating forums.

Without prejudce to the option of speaking again on this subject in greater detail on another occasion, I consider it important to point out that the emergence of two negotiating authorities on the same subject - chemical weapons - one in a multilateral framework and, simultaneously, the other in a bilateral one between the United States and the Soviet Union, is beginning to show some jagged edges that I would venture to describe as disquieting.

No one can doubt that it is a good thing for the two super-Powers to reach agreement on the elimination of weapons. However, in the specific case of chemical weapons, there exists an ongoing intense multilateral process in which many of our countries are investing a significant amount of political energy and willingness to commit ourselves. In view of this reality and of the existence of a rolling text which, given the necessary political will would now be a treaty, it must be noted that bilateral agreements and arrangements are beginning to take shape that are attached like juridical artificial limbs to the general text of the convention, generating a two-track method of negotiation, in which States negotiate with one eye on a table seating 40 States (plus observers) and the other on what may be negotiated in other, more limited forums.

We believe that the trend we are referring to is harmful in that it ultimately legitimizes an implicit veto that reintroduces situations which we thought were a thing of the past in multilateral negotiations on disarmament and which establish categories - perhaps it would be more appropriate to call them hierarchies - of States, depending on whether or not they possess the

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weapons that are to be eliminated. This is not the approach which, in our view, should be given priority if we are seeking a convention with universal participation.

Mr. President, all these negotiations in parallel, including the negotiations on nuclear and space weapons and the European regional negotiations in Vienna, although apparenty unrelated, do have, from a global perspective, an internal logic and coherence which must not be disregarded. This may be seen clearly in the many links existing between the various weapons systems under negotiation.

If one had to identify a single common thread between all of these negotiating processes, it could be found in the fact that all of them, regardless of their results, aim at redefining the framework of international security.

It is already incontrovertible that as security concerns in the European context become a less dominant factor and the relative advantage of the super-Powers - their nuclear supremacy - becomes less and less relevant in the process of change, the maintenance of a system of security based on the presence of two military alliances is doomed to obsolescence. The present structures may persist for a while, longer or shorter, depending on the political will and audacity of the actors involved, but we can have no doubt that a formidable challenge is emerging for the international community which concerns all of our States and from which none of them can stand aloof.

The task now, Mr. President, is to create the architecture of a new network of international relations in the sphere of security. That does not by any means imply a completely unfettered exercise of the imagination. On the contrary, the new dynamic will certainly incorporate important elements of the system that prevailed since the end of the Second World War, but it is also undoubtedy bound to have novel aspects and will therefore give rise to other realities.

And it is here that we think that there is an objective common to the entire international community; it is precisely in this area that the Conference on Disarmament - contrary to what some may regard as its inevitable decay - is called upon to play a relevant role.

This forum, in which countries of the North and the South - like yours and mine - of East and West are participating, has enormous potential at the present juncture. We cannot imagine a different kind of body that would be capable of properly tackling the common security problems that are emerging in a world in which bipolar confrontation is significantly weakening.

The blueprint for a new European security system should not preclude the negotiation of a comprehensive system. To continue with a basically Euro-centric vision of international security could lead us to repeating the dogmatic manoeuvring and political mapmaking which characterized the power pattern of the twentieth century.

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It is time to go forward with the building of a more integrated world, Mr. President. The common problems which unite us are more important and greater than those which divide us: development, economic growth and social justice; scientific and technological co-operation; human rights and the environment; and, in our own area a new standard for disarmament.

Mr. President, nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the banning of all nuclear-weapon tests, naval weapons, the relationship between disarmament and development, are all elements of one reality facing the international community and in dealing with it the Conference on Disarmament should be given a special role.

The interconnection of those elements in the present international panorama appears obvious. Let us look at some examples.

Taking the case of naval nuclear weapons, to which Ambassador Theorin referred just a few days ago, we consider it one that exemplifies the new trends we have mentioned. Concurring with many of the arguments put forward by Sweden, we regard the subject as particularly relevant in that it is associated with what seems to us a clear manifestation of a substitution strategy which, while reducing medium- and short-range nuclear weapons, shifts its weight to sea-launched systems.

Apart from the legitimate concern which my country, like many others, may feel about strategy escalation, there is, in the matter of naval nuclear weapons, the additional destabilizing factor of their mobility and their almost complete undetectability, which, given their range, nature and power, make them a matter of serious concern for many countries, particularly those with long coastlines, like my own.

It appears that the positioning of nuclear weapons is undergoing a physical redistribution in which those responsible for nuclear strategy are opting for the marine environment as the place of choice for such weapons. Mr. President, the Argentine delegation had occasion to mention some of these concerns when, a little less than a year ago, the parties to the Sea-bed Treaty reviewed it for the third time.

On that occasion, our delegation ventured to draw attention to what we regard as a growing imbalance between reductions in land-based weapon sytems and weapon systems based at sea or in space, now or in the future.

The results of bilateral negotiations on the subject and the difficulty of addressing such issues in multilateral forums would seem to confirm this assumption.

With respect to space-based systems, once again we are faced with a group of problems which present serious difficulties in the bilateral context and on which no progress is being made at the multilateral level. The difficulties encountered in bilateral negotiations were clearly explained to this body by distinguished Ambassadors Burt and Nazarkin. Nothing would seem to have happened since then to change the picture that they drew for us then.

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The situation, in our view, has been worsened by the evident impossibility of making any progress in the multilateral area either. I would like to dwell on this consideration because it links, as I said at the beginning of my statement, the global problems with the way in which this Conference on Disarmament reacts to the stimulus of situations that undoubtedly require concrete responses at the multilateral level.

Five years ago, the Conference on Disarmament set up a subsidiary body to deal with the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This unquestionably was in response to the common view of the members of the Conference that it was desirable to deal, in a more specific and detailed manner than was possible through discussion in plenary, with the problems associated with the militarization of space.

Since then, nothing or vitually nothing has happened in the Conference. Without wishing to reiterate ideas that I voiced when I devoted an entire statement in plenary to this matter, I would say that that is not exactly due to the fact that delegations see such inaction as connected with a comforting conclusion that space is exempt from any kind of activity that would be potentially destabilizing from a military point of view.

In my opinion, there is an unexploited area of consensus here - no doubt partial in scope but none the less significant - by way of confidence-building measures applied to space.

Unfortunately, going round in circles seems to have some faithful supporters in the Conference, and the first meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee tend to confirm that the frustrating experiences of earlier sessions have to be repeated in 1990.

Another item, Mr. President, where reality outside the Conference and its negotiating activity contrast, although this time with the same tone of irrelevance, is that of nuclear tests.

At the bilateral level, the United States and the Soviet Union have at long last agreed on the details relating to verification of the Threshold Agreements of the early seventies. This should now enable their respective legislative bodies to ratify the treaties, whose real impact on military-strategy matters, in our opinion, is nil.

This Conference on Disarmament, meanwhile, accompanies that process without reaching agreement on the terms of a mandate whose features in any case ensure that a treaty on a complete nuclear test ban would be far from imminent.

At the same time, the process of the Amendment Conference of the Moscow Treaty is moving foward, providing further evidence of the way in which the Conference on Disarmament has put itself on the sidelines on this issue.

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Mr. President, it will be obvious to any observer that, like many other existing institutional bodies, the Conference on Disarmament, must, in view of dramatic and rapid changes and the evolution taking place in the premises on which its work was based overcome its present bewilderment and set itself a clear course.

The international disarmament agenda now paradoxically requires the Conference to play a perhaps more meaningful role in the future.

An unbiased look at our agenda may also well be in order. Subjects such as the nuclear test ban and the prevention of an arms race in outer space must be dealt with appropriately. Others, whether from the "decalogue" or from our own collective wish, could no doubt be added. We referred a while ago to the question of naval disarmament.

In this rapid review of topics, we also deem it appropriate to mention the relationship between disarmament and development, or, in a broader sense, the whole range of subjects which may be regarded as generically related to the economic and social consequences of agreements on disarmament and arms control. At a time when references to "peace dividends" are part of the daily language of military and economic analysts, any collective analysis emerging from the Conference on Disarmemnt acquires special significance.

Mr. President, in this rather long statement, we have endeavoured to focus our attention on the future and have tried to point out, albeit in a somewhat disjointed fashion, the directions in which the Conference should be heading.

The inaction of the Conference on Disarmament is certainly not in the interests of anyone - neither of the States among us which are not major military Powers nor should it be in the interests of those States which possess nuclear and chemical weapons or the capacity to use space for military purposes.

The sterilization of the only multilateral forum for negotiations on security and disarmament at a time of historic changes and weaking of bipolar confrontation is exactly what must be avoided.

It is our hope, Mr. President that this conviction may provoke a consensus of the 40 States represented here.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Argentina for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to my country and to the Chair.

I have no other speakers on today's list. Does some other delegation wish to take the floor? I see none.

Members of the Conference, the Secretariat has circulated at my request a time-table of the meetings of the Conference and its subsidiary bodies for the coming week. It has been prepared, as always, in consultation with the

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chairman of the Ad Hoc committees. As to the work of the plenary, in addition to the two regular plenary meetings, the Conference will, immediately after the plenary on Tuesday, build an informal meeting on the substantive aspects of agenda item 3. As indicated in the timetable the open-ended informal consultations on improved and effective functioning of the Conference will continue on 28 June at 3.30 p.m. in this room. Of course, the proposed time-table is merely indicative and can be modified if circumstances so require. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Conference adopts this indicative time-table.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): As I have no other business before me, I now intend to adjourn this plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Tuesday, 26 June, at 10. a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.